

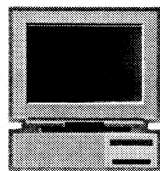
If you have questions or problems,
CONTACT US:
FOSTER CARE OMBUDSMAN



1-877-846-1602

(It's a free call!)

e-mail



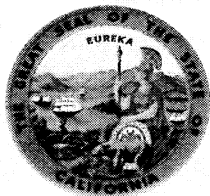
fosteryouthhelp@dss.ca.gov

www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov

Remember:

What you tell us is private
(except in certain circumstances).

The Office of the State Ombudsman wishes to thank the Los Angeles Affiliate of the National Association of Counsel for Children for their pioneering efforts to inform youth of their rights in the juvenile system.



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Gray Davis, Governor

**HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES AGENCY**
Grantland Johnson, Secretary

**DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES**
Rita Saenz, Director



PUB 395 (5/02)



Foster Care Ombudsman
744 P Street, MS 9-025
Sacramento, CA 95814

You have RIGHTS too!



This brochure is for youth
in out-of-home care.
It explains your rights!

The law* says:

You have rights if you live in foster homes, group homes, shelters, or transitional housing programs. The law also says social workers, probation officers and people where you live must tell you about your rights.

This law also says:

- Your social worker must talk with you about your rights at least once every 6 months;
- You must be told about your rights in a way that's easy to understand;
- The people where you live must answer any questions you have about your rights;
- If 6 or more foster youth can live in your foster home, the Foster Care Ombudsman will send your home a poster that lists your rights. They must put this poster in a place where you can see it. The poster has the Ombudsman telephone number on it.

Call if you think your rights are not followed – it's a free call and it won't show up on the phone bill!

1-877-846-1602

Write important info here:

Foster Care Ombudsman 1-877-846-1602

Your Social Worker (phone) _____

(Name) _____

Your Probation Officer (phone) _____

(Name) _____

Your Lawyer (phone) _____

(Name) _____

Who can help me if my rights are not followed?

Call the Foster Care Ombudsman:

Their job is to help youth with problems or questions. They can also tell you who your lawyer, social worker or probation officer is.

Call us:

1-877-846-1602

It's a free call!

Email:

fosteryouthhelp@dss.ca.gov

Write us: Foster Care Ombudsman

744 P Street, M.S. 9-025

Sacramento, CA 95814

Or, fill out the "Complaint Page" on our website. It's easy to do!

www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov

Call your lawyer:

Every youth has a lawyer (unless a judge says you cannot). You can talk to your lawyer in private. You can tell your lawyer anything you want. Most of the time, your lawyer cannot tell anyone else what you say (except in special situations; ask your lawyer about this.)

Your lawyer's job is to defend all your rights. Your lawyer can help you with:

- visits with your brothers, sisters and parents
- questions about court or your case plan
- problems with your social worker

Call your Social Worker or Probation Officer:

Their job is to make sure all your needs get taken care of.

Remember, you have the right to:

- know their name and phone number
- ask for their help
- have them call you back

Call CCL:

CCL (Community Care Licensing) gives the home you live in a license. You can call CCL if your home is not a healthy and safe place. You can call in private. CCL will not tell your home you called.

Call the Foster Care Ombudsman to get the CCL phone number.

Problems with your lawyer or social worker?

Ask for the name and telephone number of his/her supervisor. Call the supervisor and make a complaint.





NO ONE CAN SCARE YOU, HURT YOU, OR GET YOU IN TROUBLE FOR TELLING US THAT YOUR RIGHTS ARE NOT BEING FOLLOWED.

YOU have RIGHTS too!

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN A SAFE, COMFORTABLE HOME WITH:

- ◆ enough clothes and healthy food
- ◆ your own place to store your things
- ◆ an allowance (if you are in a group home)
- ◆ a phone that you can use to make confidential calls (unless a judge says you cannot)

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- ◆ be treated with respect
- ◆ go to religious services and activities of your choice
- ◆ send and get unopened mail (unless a judge says someone else can open your mail)
- ◆ contact people who are not in the foster care system (like friends, church members, teachers, and others)
- ◆ make contact with social workers, attorneys, probation officers, CASAs, foster youth advocates and supporters, or anyone else involved with your case
- ◆ be told about your placement by your social worker or probation officer

NO ONE CAN:

- ◆ lock you in a room or building (unless you are in a community treatment facility)
- ◆ abuse you physically, sexually or emotionally for any reason
- ◆ punish you by physically hurting you for any reason
- ◆ look through your things unless they have a good and legal reason

YOU HAVE RIGHTS AT COURT TOO. YOU CAN:

- ◆ go to court and talk to the judge
- ◆ see and get a copy of your court report and your case plan
- ◆ keep your court records private, unless the law says otherwise
- ◆ be told by your social worker or probation officer and your attorney about any changes in your case plan or placement

YOU HAVE HEALTH RIGHTS. YOU CAN:

- ◆ see a doctor, dentist, eye doctor, or talk to a counselor if you need to
- ◆ refuse to take medicines, vitamins or herbs (unless a doctor or judge says you must)

YOU HAVE SCHOOL RIGHTS. YOU CAN:

- ◆ go to school every day
- ◆ go to after-school activities right for your age and developmental level



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO DO SOME THINGS ON YOUR OWN. YOU CAN:

- ◆ have your own emancipation bank account (unless your case plan says you cannot)
- ◆ learn job skills right for your age
- ◆ work, unless the law says you are too young
- ◆ manage the money you earn (if right for your age, developmental level and it's in your case plan)
- ◆ go to Independent Living Program classes and activities if you are old enough

YOU HAVE FAMILY RIGHTS TOO. YOU CAN:

- ◆ visit and contact your brothers and sisters (unless a judge says you cannot)
- ◆ contact parents and other family members, too (unless a judge says you cannot)

YOU HAVE OTHER RIGHTS TOO. YOU CAN:

- ◆ tell the judge how you feel about your family, lawyer, and social worker
- ◆ tell the judge what you want to happen in your case
- ◆ have your own lawyer
- ◆ live with a family member if that would be a safe place
- ◆ call the Foster Care Ombudsman Office and Community Care Licensing at any time
- ◆ get help with school if you need it



Remember your rights.
Also remember that the foster parent's or group home's job is to supervise you and keep you safe and healthy.

If you feel you are being discriminated against because of, but not limited to, your sex, race, color, religion, or for any other reason, please contact the Foster Care Ombudsman Help-line.



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